December 3, 2020

To the Graduate Program:

This project, entitled "The impact of an ESL teacher's Website on English language learners in first grade level to improve the English language learners' academic writing." and written by Jose Luis Rodriguez Quitian, is presented to the Graduate Program of Greensboro College. I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts with a Major in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

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Michelle Plaisance, Advisor

We have reviewed this
Project and recommend its
acceptance

_____
Michelle Plaisance,
Director, Graduate Program in TESOL

_____
Kathleen Keating
Chair, Department of English

Accepted for the Graduate Program

_____
Jane C. Girardi

THE IMPACT OF AN ESL TEACHER'S WEBSITE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN FIRST GRADE LEVEL TO IMPROVE THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS' ACADEMIC WRITING

Presented to
The graduate program
of
Greensboro College

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the requirements for de Degree
Master of Arts in
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

by
Jose Luis Rodriguez Quitian

December 2020

Advisor: Dr. Michelle Plaisance

Abstract

Immigration has become an important issue around the United States because it has impacted its society in many aspects. Currently, the immigrant population is increasing rapidly, and the educational field is facing much difficulties when teaching to students who speak a language different from English. This phenomenon has made the teachers' teaching practice more difficult in the classrooms of the U.S. schools. Additionally, welcoming students with different backgrounds bring a variety of cultures in the classrooms where the teachers and English native speakers experience how diversity works nowadays. However, the immigrant children, not only bring differences in terms of culture and language but also, they may bring differences in academic levels. This latter is a great deal in education because it may make the learning and the transitional period smoother or more difficult for the immigrant students.

It is known that the transitional period for newcomers is a difficult experience because they must adjust to a new culture, a new language, and a new school system. However, the role of teachers at school may make a great impact on these students because their assistance is pivotal to the learning process (language and content). For this reason, making use of accurate tools to help students to learn and succeed at school is important. The teacher has the challenging task to help English language learners (Ells) to master the language domains regardless of how difficult this might be. One of the most difficult domains for Ells is the writing domains due to cultural traits and rhetorical patterns (Leki, 1992). Therefore, providing a website to Ells would support their academic writing process at school in different levels. This website contains a

variety of activities that assist the Ells practice, reinforce, and improve their writing weaknesses to succeed academically in other subjects at school.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Kitty Hawk elementary school in North Carolina and all my first grade students over the last three years because they motivated me to be a better professional. Thanks Dr. Michelle Plaisance for guiding me in this project and being patience with me. I appreciate your positive feedback, hard work and advice to do my best.

Table of Contents

Title Page ……..……...i

Abstract ……...ii

Acknowledgements ……...…iii

Table of Content ……....iv

Chapters

1. Chapter One: Introduction ……..…..…1
2. Chapter Two: Literature Review ……5
3. Chapter Three: Project Design ……..…….19
4. Chapter Four: The Project ……22
5. Chapter Five: Conclusion ……37

Appendices ……39

References ……50

Chapter One: Introduction

Immigration has become an important issue around the United States because it has impacted society in many aspects. Albornoz, Cabrales, and Hauk (2018) defined immigration as "Immigration is a prevalent feature of many societies" (p. 856). Newcomers are important for society because they come to be part of the new culture. This immigrant phenomenon has made a big impact in the educational field, including the classrooms of U.S. schools. Currently, in these classrooms, many cultures and different languages coexist where different perspectives about cultures are embraced by immigrants and natives. This has been an ongoing situation because immigrants seek better opportunities in terms of education and economical status. As consequence, the variety of cultures in U.S. schools is growing and changing the demographics of schools and teachers' understanding of the concept of diversity (Martin & Mulvihill, 2018).

Considering all these changes in the U.S. schools due to the new cultures coming to the country, we should embrace new concepts of culture to be able to welcome the newcomers and build relationships with those who are in the process of adjusting in the country, especially when the population is comprised of children who need to be educated. The schools in the U.S. are responsible for educating Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) students more than in any other nation (Lan & Brown, 2002). For this reason, it is important to make changes in the school system that allows the newcomers, with new cultural traits, to adjust to the school system of the U.S., allowing for a smooth transitional period. Also, it is important to support classroom teachers, many of whom are not prepared to welcome diversity into their classroom to teach

CLD students. Nevertheless, we should acknowledge the efforts that these classroom teachers make when attempting to teach because they spend extra time thinking about strategies that may work when teaching or doing research on how to deliver their lessons more effectively in the classroom. For this reason, the classroom teachers need the help of an expert in this field. The role of the English as a second language (ESL) instructor plays a pivotal importance for the CLD students and classroom teachers. Ajayi (2011) considered that ESL teachers are "a critical component in language teaching" (p. 656). The ESL instructors implement strategies that help ESL students to improve their academic skills to succeed in the acquisition of the English language.

One of the most difficult skills for ELLs to master is to place their ideas on paper; however, this not only depends on the English level of the students, but also on the instructions by the English as a second language (ESL) teachers. It is important to implement strategies that help ESL students to improve their academic writing to succeed in the acquisition of this specific skill in the second language. To put it differently, the more accurate strategies the ESL instructors implement with the ELLs, the more opportunities to succeed the students have in the classroom with their homeroom teachers. Also, the homeroom teachers have the opportunity to check the English language learners' progress in their content area throughout the activities they carry out in classes. Furthermore, they try their best to keep the CLD students motivated towards success.

It is important to motivate and lower the affective filter on these students so they can express their ideas and thoughts at ease (Krashen, 1982). For this reason, providing positive feedback to students is a pivotal task because their feelings are compromised. Hattie and Timperley (2007) stated that "Feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement, but this impact can be either positive or negative" (p. 81). Therefore, we as

teachers should be careful and thoughtful when providing feedback to our students in the class. This means that when providing feedback on any students' tasks, teachers should highlight the good aspects to reinforce weaknesses. Fong et al. (2018) affirmed that "the more credible the feedback giver is perceived to be, the greater the trust will be ascribed by the feedback receiver" (p. 239). That is to say that positive feedback may have a positive impact on the students because they feel they are making progress in their tasks.

Therefore, this project presents a well-designed website for ELL students in the first-grade who are struggling in English writing in the different subject they take at school. This website is to help first-grade students to improve their academic writing skills that will have an impact on other subjects, such as sciences, ELA, social studies, and math. Also, the website will contain some modules with different cognitive levels. The ESL instructor should determine what level each ELL should take. The purpose of these modules is to have the ELLs working on the different activities that it contains to strengthen their weaknesses and fill up gaps about the English language acquisition. Besides, this website contains quizzes at the end of each topic and an end-of-module exam. The latter determines whether the English learner goes up to the next level or remains at the same level. The end-of-module exam will be a written exercise where the students will create their sentences putting into practice all that they learn in the module they take. Furthermore, it may be a great experience for classroom teachers and students to have access to this website to strengthen their weaknesses and improve their writing English skills as they learn content in other classes. This website can be seen as a cross-curricular tool to support ELLs and classroom teachers to make their teaching and learning processes go smoothly. Finally, classroom teachers can use this website to adapt their contents into it and perform activities that focus mainly on their subject area without setting aside the ELLs' writing improvement process.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The United States is a country that has welcomed immigrants from all over the world looking for better life opportunities. The immigrants start making their own families that will need to be educated and embark upon an educational journey in U.S schools. However, this educational experience may be difficult and challenging for the immigrant students and the teachers at school due to language and culture differences. Wong and Snow (2000) stated that "children who speak little or no English on arrival at school, children whose families may be unfamiliar with the demands of American schooling—the challenge is even greater" (p. 3). For this reason, we can say that teachers require more preparation when addressing immigrant students to be able to fulfill their educational needs. By the same token, In U.S. schools, demographic changes are taking place due to the amount of English language learners (ELLs) enrolling in this schools, having as a result a larger diversity situation (Falconer & Byrnes, 2003). For this reason, concerns among classroom teachers has become a concern in U.S. schools because they do not know how to teach concepts from their content areas to ELLs due to the lack of experience with this population (Pang, 2013).

One of the most difficult domains is the writing skill, and it is a long process for students to be able to master (Cole, 2008). Once the ELLs start the educational process in school, they may face many difficulties in writing because putting thoughts on papers is a difficult skill for students to learn (Camacho & Alves, 2017). Nevertheless, these students will learn all the necessary strategies at school to be able to write English properly, at least at their grade level. In addition, these ELLs will require the assistance by an ESL instructor who provides directions to

help the students to acquire the writing skills, so the ELLs put those skills into practice to have cross-curricular success. Cole (2008) explained that "A student who writes and understands the strategies being executed in a piece of writing and can follow what is going on with knowing eyes, are seldom confused or surprised" (p. 152). For example, ELLs who are making progress in their writing when having ESL instructional time, they will show that progress when writing their sentences, ideas, or paragraphs in other subjects, such as English language arts, science and social studies. As a result, their affective filter will be lowered in a way that they will feel confident with their pieces of writing creations.

English Language Learners (ELLs)

U.S. schools have been welcoming for children who come from immigrant families, receiving new cultures, and giving a global touch to the classrooms (Rong & Brown, 2002). This process of adjusting to new cultures in the classroom has affected the educational philosophy and the curriculum that classroom teachers use to prepare their classes/lesson plans (Rong & Brown, 2002). Once the immigrant students come to the schools in the United States, they are identified as English language learners (ELLs) (Gonzalez, Pagan, Wendell & Love, 2011). Herrera and Murry (2016) described ELLs as, "Individuals who are in the process of transitioning from a home or native language to English" (p. 6). Nevertheless, the ELLs are also known as culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students (Herrera & Murry, 2016). In the same way, the ELLs bring with them their own cultural traits that broaden the diversity in a school community (Moloney & Saltmarsh, 2016). However, cultural traits are not the characteristics that ELLs bring into the classrooms, but also a set of skills that they acquired when learning the first language, which are expected to be helpful in the second language acquisition (Khalili, Hadaeghi

& Mahdavi, 2015). Also, Khalili et al. (2015) reported that the ELLs "Possess general knowledge about the world which they can draw on to help them understand L2 input as well as communication strategies that can help them make effective use of their L2 knowledge" (p. 26). Although this may be true, learning a second language is a difficult task for students, and they may face many difficulties in the English acquisition process (Nursyaheedah, Noor, Nabila, Hazeem, & Azli, 2018), especially during the adjusting time (first month of arrival to U.S.). During this period of adjustments, the ELLs may experience confusion due to the attempts of understanding the new curriculum at school (Gebhard, 2012). For this reason, it is important that teachers become familiar with the ELLs' background, culture, and family, so they can link both cultures and make a smoother transitional time. Also, teachers should be aware, as Adera and Manning (2014) stressed "The learning process begins in the home environment where experiences are initially shaped by the cultural background of the family" (p. 68). Moreover, ELLs are to interact at school with their teachers and partners, putting into practice the little knowledge of the English language they have, or they acquired at home with the family. The knowledge of the English language that the ELLs acquired over the years, strengthen by going through or experiencing the second language acquisition stages in their learning process. (Hong, 2008). Following the same idea, Herrera and Murry (2016) highlighted two important aspects that take place in the ELLs' English acquisition. One aspect is when the ELLs develop their basic interpersonal communicative language (BICS) which is the ability to keep a casual conversation and the use of basic vocabulary to express their ideas (Herrera & Murry, 2016). Another aspect is the development of the cognitive academic language proficiency of the ELLs (CALP) which is the academic vocabulary they learn in the classroom with their teachers in the different subjects they take at school (Herrera & Murry, 2016). Both processes contribute a positive impact to the acquisition process of the ELLs, especially to expand their vocabulary

levels since it takes up to 10 years to catch up with the native speakers in academic vocabulary (Chen et al., 2012). In addition, the help of the classroom teachers and English as a second language (ESL) instructor plays a pivotal role in this language acquisition process.

Classroom Teachers

Teachers are important characters in the classroom who plays a valuable role in the learning process of all the students, regardless of their background and language. Moreover, a great deal of responsibilities take part in the classroom teachers' daily teaching practice because they must ensure that students meet their academic needs (Hogan & Hathcote, 2014). For this reason, classroom teachers assist students as much as possible in their learning process. However, this assistance may not be enough when they receive ELLs in their classrooms because of the language differences. This language difference makes communication dirtier among teachers and ELLs because teachers do not know their culture, nor their language (Pang, 2013). Thus, it is recommended that classroom teachers learn basic words/vocabulary in the ELLs' native language to welcome them and make them feel part of the classroom (Pang, 2013; Allison & Rehm, 2011)). Additionally, educating ELLs is a mandatory task that all teachers are asked to carry out due to federal and state laws (Hogan & Hathcote, 2014). Therefore, teachers should be trained on teaching to ELLs at any point of their teaching careers to be more effective for these cultural and linguistically diverse students. Lucas and Villegas (2013) stated that "Policymakers and teacher educators increasingly recognize the need to attend to teacher learning across perspective, induction, and later stages of teachers' careers, and to prepare all teachers to teach ELLs" (p. 106).

Despite of all difficulties and laws requirements that embrace the ELLs inclusion in the classrooms, classroom teacher/homeroom teachers come up with strategies and adaptations to

their teaching practice to suit the ELLs academic needs and keep them engaged in classes. As Reeves (2006) noted "educators must adapt traditional approaches to instructions or, at a minimum, supplement their methods" (p. 132). In his research, Reeves (2006) also acknowledged that teachers struggle identifying the appropriate and effective changes in their approaches or teaching methods to suit the needs of the ELLs. Foundationally, it is important that classroom teachers prepare and receive training on how to teach culturally and diverse students. Falconer and Byrnes (2003) suggested that "teachers need more opportunities to develop the skills, knowledge, and positive attitudes necessary to be effective educators of young, culturally diverse students" (p. 199). In the same way, teachers who feel unprepared to teach ELLs require the support by the school districts to provide professional development for teaching ELLs (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). In effect, one of the most important aspect when teaching to ELLs is understanding the second language acquisition stages because it provides classroom teachers the knowledge to implement more effective strategies to help ELLs improve their English level (Lake & Pappamihiel, 2003). Another advantage of classroom teachers receiving training to teach ELLs learners is that they start implementing those strategies that covers the four language domains (Speaking, reading, listening, and writing) and provide opportunities for the students to practice to reach attainable goals (Lumbrears & Rupley, 2019). Moreover, Lumbrears and Rupley (2019) pointed out that "the intention is to teach the ELL students' academic English so that they can have wider access to curriculum that fulfills their potential both academically and socially" (p. 23). All this process of teaching to ELLs is a challenge for mainstream classroom teachers who accept the challenge to impact students who speak other language different from English. However, this process becomes easier when the classroom teachers have the support of an English as a second language (ESL) instructor.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Instructor.

The need and support by English as a second language (ESL) teachers has become important over the years in the U.S schools due to the increased population of ELLs (Wong, Indiatsi, & Wong, 2016; Figueroa & Toff, 2012). The ESL teachers are prepared professionals who have received professional development to address the Ells population at school (Nieto, 2017). In view of this necessity, schools provide complement instructions in-school and after school hours ESL service to reinforce the ELLs' needs regarding language weaknesses (Vitan & Gallagner, 2019). One of the main goals of ESL teachers is to help ELLs to use every opportunity to use the English language in their context (Nation, 2013). To put it differently, to strike up conversations with people around them in their daily life, to read advertisements in the streets, to read the name of the stores to be able to identify the places they need to go in. Another important goal for ESL teachers, is to build a positive relationship with their students to make more effective the teaching and learning process in the classroom (Webb and Barrett, 2014). However, the positive relationship is not only with the ELLs, but also with the classroom teachers who may be struggling in their teaching practicing when attempting to teach them. Baecher, Farnsworth, and Ediger (2014) posted that "ESL teachers may be called upon to work collaboratively with their content and classroom teacher counterparts in order to co-plan integrated content and language instruction" (p. 119). Likewise, Giles and Yazan (2020) stated that "ESL and content teachers' collaboration can contribute to higher graduation rates" (p. 2). Therefore, when ESL instructors come into the classroom teachers to observe to later discuss with them the best ways to support both content and language acquisition is a great contribution to the ELLs (Delli, 2009). Consequently, the implementation of professional development session between the classroom and the ESL teacher plays a pivotal role because they work together to come up with strategies that help the ELLs in both classes (ESL and content) (Giles, 2018). Mandel and Eisarmen (2016, as cited in Tasdemir & Yildirim, 2017) posted that

"successful collaborative teaching also benefits teachers. First, it promotes teacher growth by creating an opportunity for teachers to learn from another professional on a regular basis" (p. 634). As a result of this collaboration process between ESL teachers and classroom teachers, is that both parties have the opportunity to learn features on the ELLs from two different perspectives to develop, implement, and design classroom instructions that help ELLs to meet their needs.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Teacher.

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Teaching Academic Writing in Elementary

When it comes to teaching, the role of the teachers plays a pivotal position in the education field. Also, teachers provide great assistance to the students when they are well prepared and have broad knowledge in their teaching practice (Rice, 2003). As a result, students are given accurate and good directions to be successful academically, especially when teachers are addressing difficult language domains as the writing skill. Camacho and Alves (2017) noted that "writing is frequently difficult and can be demotivating for beginning writers" (p. 253). Besides, students who face difficulties in learning to write properly are at disadvantage and experience more difficulties at school (Camacho & Alves, 2017). Different from English native speakers, mastering the writing domain may be more difficult and more complex for ELLs

because they are using the English as a second language to express their thought in a written form (Talosa & Maguddayao, 2018).

ELLs face many difficulties with academic writing and a considerable amount of research has been conducted to discern reasons why students are struggling writers. Professor Leki (1992) wrote a book as a guide for ESL teachers and in chapter eight she discussed how contrastive rhetoric used in different cultures determines how students construct their writing. According to Kaplan (1966, as cited in Leki, 1992), he concluded that ELLs systematically write differently depending on their language backgrounds. Leki (1992) highlighted that ELLs create their own writing patterns based on social, economic, and political realities, not based on their own cognition. Through detailed explanations, the author illustrated how three main parts of the world express themselves in written forms: East Asia, Middle East, and European (Leki, 1992). For instance, in East Asian rhetoric, tradition, authority, and harmony are valued (Oliver, 1971, as cited in Leki, 1992). In Middle Eastern rhetoric, sacred texts are exemplary structures. In the same way, European rhetoric varies across countries, but in Spanish rhetoric, writers are encouraged to generalize and embellish their ideas (Leki, 1992). Furthermore, Hu (2014) commented that "teachers would be in a better position to understand students' writing problems if they were to learn about the distinct nature of L2 writing shaped by linguistic and cultural differences" (p. 55). Understanding contrastive rhetoric and cultural traits helps teachers and ELLs recognize why writing in English may be difficult because students must adapt to a new writing structure and the writing is shaped by.

Continuing the investigative path of understanding writing difficulties by students, another author, Omta Zoi Solagha (2013), a student at Stockholm University in the department of language education, studied teacher attitudes and endeavors with writing difficulties in an English classroom. Solagha (2013) aimed to analyze how teachers worked in the classroom and

what approaches they used to facilitate and support student writing. According to Graham and Harris (1993, as cited in Solagaha, 2013), there are three student writing difficulties: lack of expertise in text creation, lack of familiarity with the content area to be written, and lack of planning strategies. In his study Solagha (2013) collected data using a qualitative method where he interviewed three teachers, referred to as informants throughout his study. After the collection of this information, the study highlighted the importance of teachers being adults who use their best judgment in the process of enhancing their students' academic writing skills. Vygotskij (1999, as cited in Solagaha, 2013), explained that a student best develops learning skills under the guidance of and interaction with an adult.

As a matter of fact, teachers tailor the purpose of writing based on students writing level to foster students' motivation towards writing (Ekholm, Zumbrunn, & DeBusk-Lane, 2018). However, the study of Solaga (2013) identified that teaching writing is challenging for teachers since students surrender easily when they recognize their weaknesses in their writing skills. Solagha (2013) concluded his study by conveying various ways teachers can help students enhance their writing skills in the classroom: increasing motivation, believing in student capacity to accomplish assignments, opening communication to help teachers detect students' difficulties, providing opportunities to practice writing skills, and by using computers as a tool for writing. One common difficulty ELLs face when writing, is when they transfer words and expression from their L1 language as well as the poor vocabulary and the organization of the ideas (Yate, Bermeo, & Castañeda, 2013). Based on the background research surrounding student writing difficulties, if teachers take certain actions, they can motivate and make a positive impact on their students' academic writing outcomes.

Teachers should motivate their students when writing academic papers and make them aware of the importance of the academic writing in their future professions and for society. Wang and Matsumura (2019) described writing as "an occasion to display knowledge" (p. 417). Thus, teachers should focus their attention towards students' motivation to write and help them to develop a positive attitude when they face difficulties at writing. Fareed, Ashraf, & Bilal (2016) claimed that "teachers expect the students to write very well but the teacher never motivates them to write by themselves" (p. 87). Teachers are responsible for motivating their students to develop a positive attitude towards writing when they face difficulties. Therefore, teachers need to provide ELLs with a variety of activities, so the they can choose which activity they want to part of. Hassam (2015) affirmed that when students write about the topics they like, their motivation increases and keep them willing to work when they encounter difficulties. Likewise, teachers must bear in mind that providing students positive written comments, giving opportunities to the students to make corrections, supporting feedback peer, and encouraging them for their attempt to improve their writing in English (Shin, 2002). Also, teachers can be creative by adapting activities that motivate students to grow as a writer instead of fearing to make mistakes.

For instance, Fareed, Ashraf, and Bilal (2016) recommended that teachers should create activities, such as writing competitions, for students to practice different aspects of writing that may be difficult, like the uses of "tenses, articles, and structures" (Fareed et al., 2016, p. 87). These types of activities help teachers to foster a writing culture in the classrooms to highlight the importance of the writing process. Yate et al. (2013) defined writing as "an ongoing process" (p. 13) that students should take part in to be able to improve their writing skill. Therefore, teachers should give students accurate tools and knowledge when starting to write academic

papers in lower grade levels in order to build toward positive outcomes at higher levels of education.

Website as a tool to improve the academic writing

The implementation of different tools to help students to learn more are always strategies that teachers find interesting to apply and use with them. Currently, the use of technology has impacted the teaching practice offering teachers and students new ways to provide and receive knowledge (Abbas et al., 2013). Also, the use of technology has impacted, specifically, the language learning field because of the use of the computer and the Internet among ELS students (Zha et al., 2006). For this reason, ESL teachers and instructors are making use of tools, such as computers and the Internet to support and develop the writing skills on ELLs (Nomas, 2013). Moore, Rutherdford, and Crawford (2016) remarked that "Technology can be used by students in a variety of ways to support English language learning" (p. 861). Thus, counties and schools should provide teachers the necessary tools, so they use them to deliver their classes with accuracy and efficacy (Facella et al., 2005). Furthermore, using computers in the English language learning area may be challenging for ELLs because it requires learning skills in technology (Park, C., & Son, 2009). For this reason, students (native and ELLs) must be familiar with the use of computers and techniques that facilitate the use of it (Nomas, 2013).

The use of computers in the classrooms is a good strategy to implement with students because it provides many benefits not only to English native speakers, but also ELLs who need to improve their language skills (Borges, 2014). As a matter of fact, many ESL teachers use computers to improve the writing skills of the ELLs because these students are more engaged with the use of this tool (Abbas et al., 2013). Furthermore, Computers can be used to expand or build vocabulary on ELLs that are necessary to learn the English language faster (Green, 2005).

Likewise, Pierson (2014) stated that the use of computers "increases students' motivation and results in impressive student achievement" (p. 3). Considering the benefits that computers provide to ELLs in keeping them engaged in their English language acquisition, it is recommended that teachers integrate technology, such as computers, to use websites or platforms to improve the ELLs' writing skills (Yunus et al., 2019). Similarly, the use of websites is progressively used as educational tools, inside and outside of school, to provide further assistance to students in writing (Svàrdemo et al., 2016). Svàrdemo et al. (2016) also explained that websites are "Online support" (p. 34) to be used as a complement to classroom teaching. To put it differently, teachers/instructors assign tasks on websites to English native students and ELLs to improve their writing skills in the classrooms or at home. As a result, students become more independent when practicing their writing papers, doing their tasks, or working on the websites as a complement activity (Svàrdemo et al., 2016). Another benefit from the use of websites to improve ELLs' academic writing, it is the incorporation of images or pictures as an aid to trigger students' imagination to create a better piece of writings (Listyani,2019; Kwan, 2019). The use of pictures, photographs, and graphics are valuable resources for ELLs when writing because it provides an idea of what they are writing about. Certainly, effective pieces of writing demonstrate students' progress in writing, especially when using academic words to maintain coherence and cohesion in their writings (Yousefpoori-Naeim et al., 2018). Thus, the use of pictures, photographs, or graphics through a website, as an improving writing tool, help ELLs to use new academic vocabulary in their writing creations. Improving the writing skills in ELLs require a great effort by all the teachers that are involved in providing a good educational service to the students: homeroom teachers, ELS instructors as well as the active participation of the ELLs.

This literature review began with an analysis of the ELLs' situation when they enrolled in school in the U.S. and how the culture plays an important role in the immigrant students' English acquisition process. As a result of welcoming new cultures in the classrooms, new ways of teachings, methodologies, strategies, or instructional tools are recommended to be used to support greater assistance in the ELLs' learning process. Also, the effort of classroom teachers was acknowledged as a positive impact on these students who are learning English as a second language, proving that classroom teachers require training to be more effective in teaching this population. The research proposes the use of a website to help students to learn vocabulary and academic vocabulary to improve their writing skills. Ultimately, all the students, English native speakers, and ELLs need to be prepared for a globalization world that required future professionals with a strong foundation in 21st-century skill

Chapter Three: Project Design

In this chapter, I explain the rationale for creating a website as a tool for English as a second language (ESL) and classroom teachers who struggle in the classroom with the English language learners students (ELLs) to help them to expand their academic vocabulary and improve their academic writing in the English language. This website assists ESL and classroom teachers in supporting their classes when teaching academic writing in the classrooms and outside of the classrooms. ESL instructors and classroom teachers would make use of this website to aim for improvement in ELLs' writing skills. This improvement traits would be noticeable in other subject areas, too.

It is known that the number of students who come from different countries and speak a language different from English is increasing in the U.S. (Jacques, 2014). Thus, classroom teachers must become aware of all the changes that a regular classroom goes through in terms of teaching methodologies when students from other cultures come to be part of it. Once ELLs have joined the classes, they may face difficulties due to their lack of English proficiency creating a language barrier (Jacques, 2014). This lack of English proficiency is more evident when ELLs create their pieces of writing because, as Yunus et al. (2019) stated, the "writing skill is always the most challenging part of learning in the classroom" (p. 452). Therefore, implementing a website to improve writing skills may help ELLs to make progress in their English language acquisition process. Moreover, implementing a website for writing improvement for ELLs is a great tool that classroom and ESL teachers can make use of to support their lesson plans.

The website allows classroom and ESL instructors to select the proficiency level that fits better each ELLs' needs. This website is a tool not to only practice writing, but also to foster students' motivation to write or create their pieces of writing. Also, the website presents an interesting design with pictures that draw students' attention, and ultimately motivates them. This way, ELLs develop a better attitude towards writing. That is to say that, working with a positive attitude towards learning helps ELLs have more chances to succeed in their English acquisition (Tadayyon & Ketabi, 2014). In other words, having students engaged and motivated is pivotal to second language acquisition because it triggers their willingness to keep on trying to succeed.

The final product of this project is to design and create a website for ELLs who require reinforcement in expanding and building the academic vocabulary necessary to meet their goals and to be on grade level. The difficulties that ELLs face in writing do not always come from the lack of-English knowledge, but rather from their poor vocabulary (Yousefpoori-Naeim et al., 2018). For this reason, providing students with accurate tools, such as a website to improve writing, may close gaps in terms of the academic vocabulary, while also promoting language expansion. The website contains four writing modules that students will work on to practice and improve their writing skills. Each writing module has a different level of difficulty which increases as the ELLs go through them. The first module is called "Introducing registers" where the students will find a set of slides with the following questions: How do you greet your friends/homeroom teacher/principal or president? Can you think of any other ways of greeting different people? The purpose of this set of slides is to lead students into the formal and informal concepts about writing. The use of two pictures: "thumbs up" and "Sipping tea" will help the students identify formality and informality contexts. The objective of this first module is for ELLs to identify the formal and informal written language. In the second module "Writing

letters," the students will learn to write a letter. The ELLs learn about the parts of letters and related vocabulary \ will be covered. The ELLs will be more involved with academic words. At this point, the students may have more clarity about the concepts of formal and informal. The third module is called "Storytelling" where the students will learn about the sequence of stories and how to use sequence words when writing. The fourth module is called "Persuading" where the students will read a short story. After this, they will rewrite the story by replacing informal vocabulary to use a formal or academic vocabulary as well as sequence words. The objective of these four modules is to provide strategies, vocabulary, and concepts to the ELLs to improve their academic writing. After finalizing the four modules, the ELLs create a letter to the principal of their school suggesting to him/her that they might include another type of meal into the school menu. In this letter, the students put into practice their writing skills they learned in the modules.

Conclusion

The need for new tools to support ELLs' writing skills calls for the implementation of websites, as academic resources, to facilitate and foster students' motivation towards learning. Since technology plays an important role in teaching and has become a need in learning a second language (Nomass, 2013), it is necessary to implement strategies and activities that involve technological tools to help ELLs write with greater ease in the target language. Moreover, using a website to help ELLs improve their writing, as a supplemental resource will allow students to increase their knowledge in technology and develop better their 21st-century skills to step into their future workplace with higher academic standards.

Chapter Four: Project

This project contains a website with four modules to improve English language learners' academic writing. The purpose of these modules is to have ELLs working on the different activities that it contains to strengthen their weaknesses, as well as to fill up gaps in their English language acquisition. The website I created can be accessed at the URL https://oaktreeducation.com/

The four modules developed in this website took into account the first grade North Carolina ELA (English Language Arts) curriculum standards in order to provide a better approach to the needs of the ELLs. Additionally, by using the North Carolina curriculum standards, ESL teachers will be implementing the corresponding use of contents and topics to help students succeed during the school year. The four modules were named as *introducing registers, writing letters, storytelling* and *expressing opinion*. Each of these modules offers ELLs an order from basic activities to advance activities to provide the opportunity to improve their academic writing through creative activities where ELLs need to classify, match, ask, answer, cut, read, and write.

Considering the increased and changing demographics (Martin & Mulvihill, 2018) in the U.S. schools due to the new cultures entering in the country, the activities proposed in the four modules embrace new concepts of culture where newcomers and feel welcomed in the process of adjusting to a new culture. Therefore, a number of animated cultural images will be added to each module activity to promote global awareness and tolerance among cultures at an early age.

Additionally, the website will provide and interactive virtual chat where ESL teachers can use to text a certified ESL teacher for further information, questions or extra material that can benefit ELLs to improve their academic writing and be more prepared in their upcoming academic years.

In the first section of the website, I will introduce the logo and home page. This home page contains information about this project and a tab named “Academic Writing” where ESL teachers can access to the four modules (Figure 4.1. See also Appendix A, Slide #1)

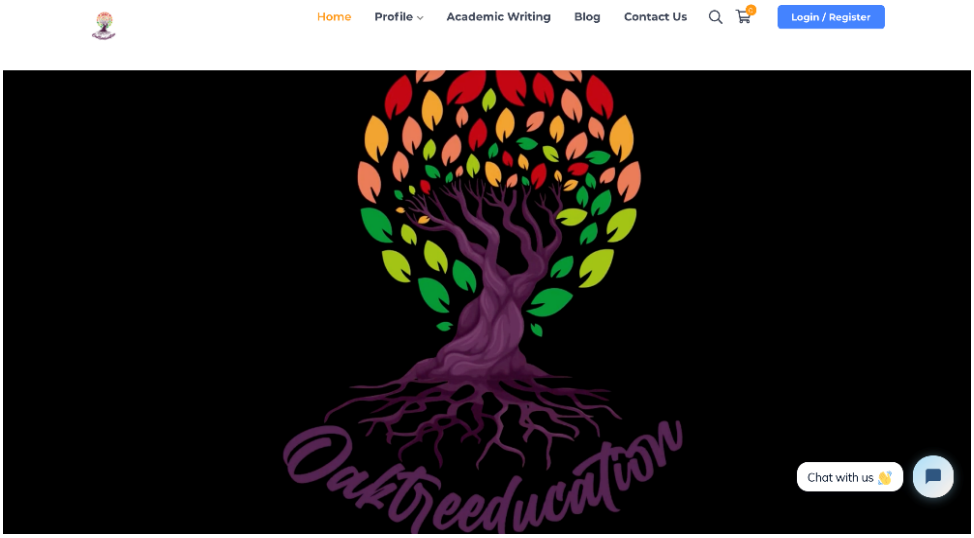


Figure 4.1 Welcome to Oaktreeducation

Then, I will display on top of the website where ESL teachers can connect to collaborate, learn and share new ideas to help ELLs improve their academic writing. (Figure 4.2. See also Appendix A, Slide #2)

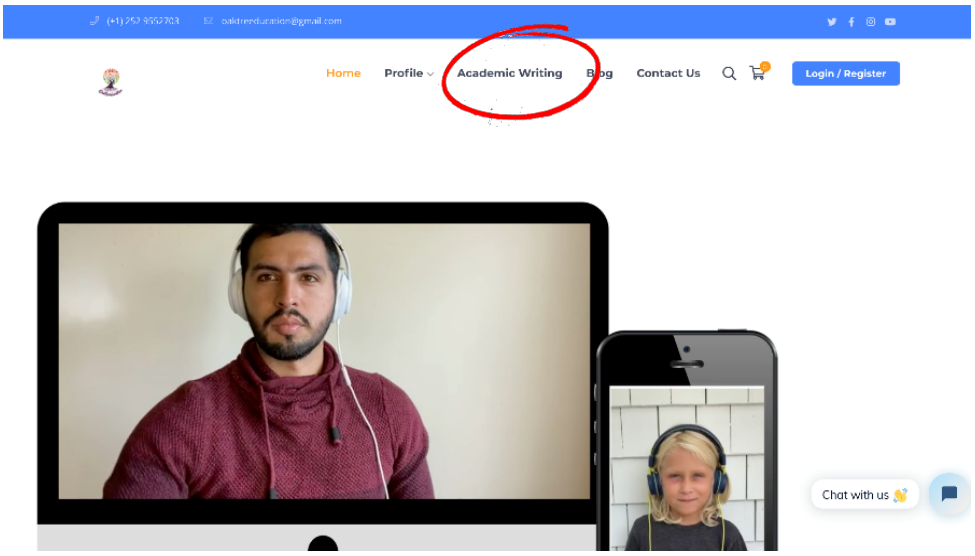


Figure 4.2 Connect with us

After this, I will display the four courses ESL teachers can get access to it. These courses are introducing registers, writing letter, storytelling and expressing opinion. (See Figure 4.3. See also Appendix A, Slide #3).

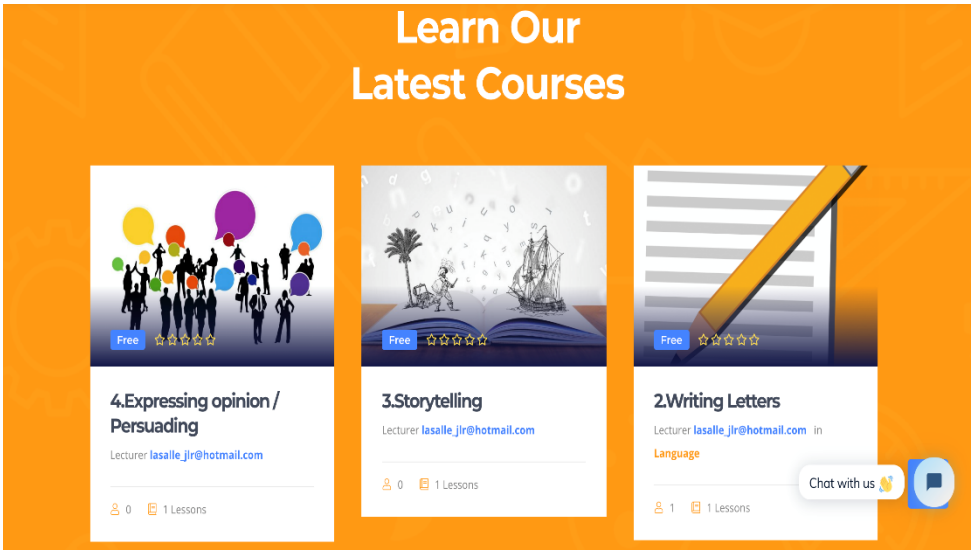


Figure 4.3 Introducing of Modules

Additionally, if ESL teachers are interested in the four modules, they are welcome to register their email account to get new updates for upcoming courses and activities.(See Figure 4.4. See also Appendix A, Slide #4).

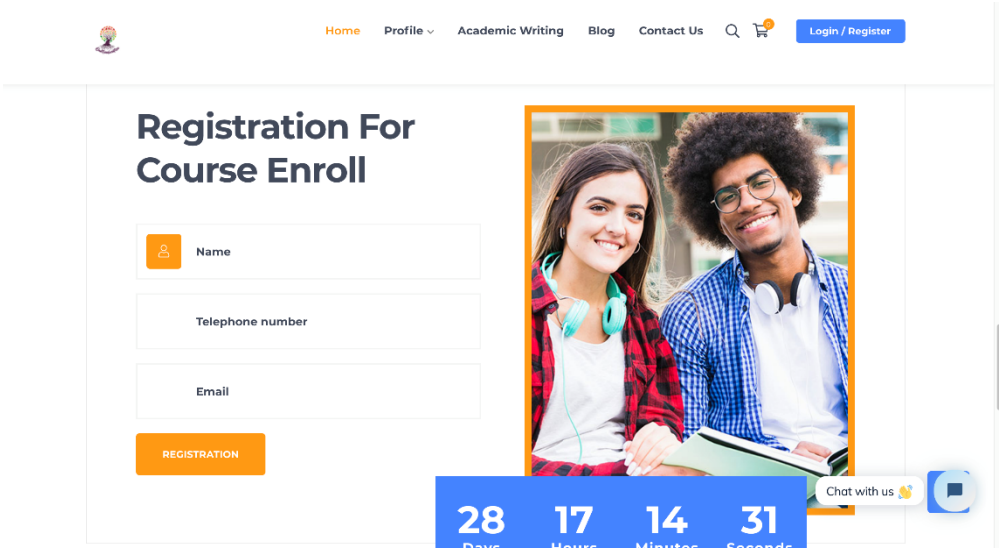


Figure 4.4 Course Registration

Besides, ESL teachers will have an interactive chat to get further assistant in the four modules or additional material to support ELLs. (See Figure 4.5. See also Appendix A, Slide #5).

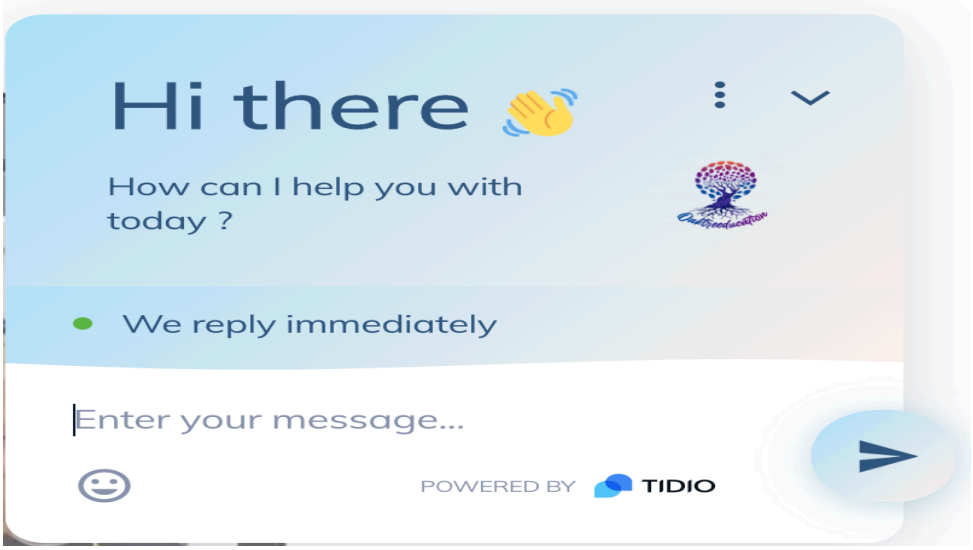


Figure 4.5 How Can I Assist you Today?

In this section, I will display all the tabs you can find in the home page. By clicking the option, “Academic Writing” the four module will be shown by numbers in a different page. (See Figure 4.6. See also Appendix A, Slide #6).

Figure 4.6 Academic Writing Modules

Then, I will introduce the module named “Introducing registers”. In this module, ESL teachers will be able to find a google slide presentation with a pdf format to be downloaded. (See Figure 4.7. See also Appendix A, Slide #7)

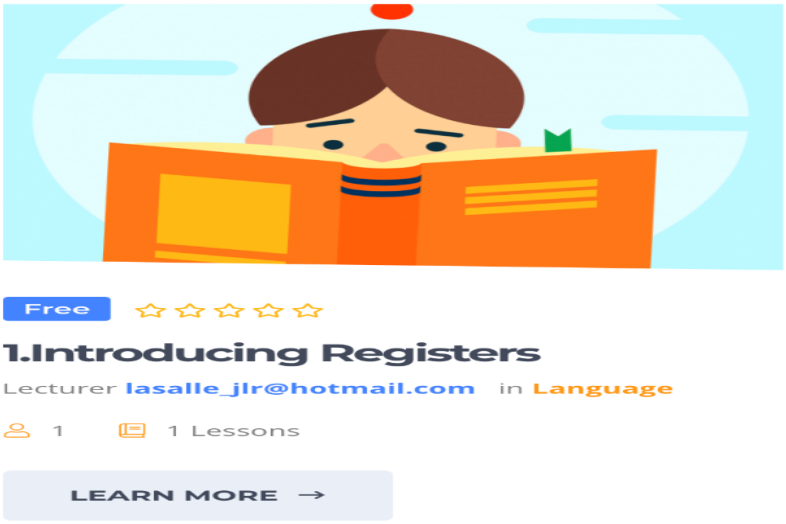


Figure 4.7 Introduction registers

After this, ESL teachers need to scroll down to find the option called “curriculums” with the name of the module introducing registers. Once ESL teachers click on that option, they will be able to see the activities from that module. It is imperative to remember that in order to get all the materials form the modules, ESL teacher will always need to scroll down in each module and find the curriculums option. (See Figure 4.8. See also Appendix A, Slide #8)

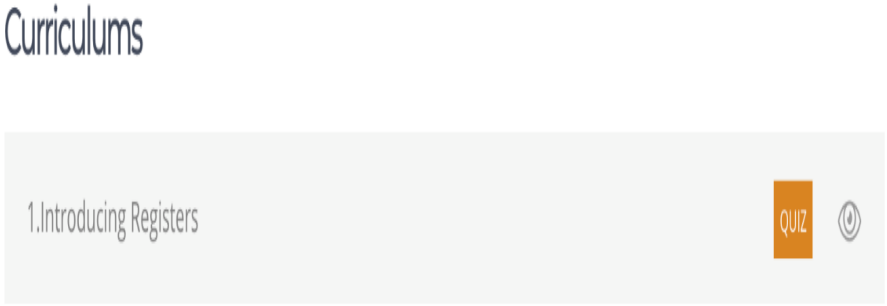


Figure 4.8 Curriculums

Then, ESL teachers will have the option to download the activities from this module. In these activities, ELLs need to classified greetings and have to identify the two different registers: formal-informal. (See Figure 4.9. See also Appendix A, Slide #9)

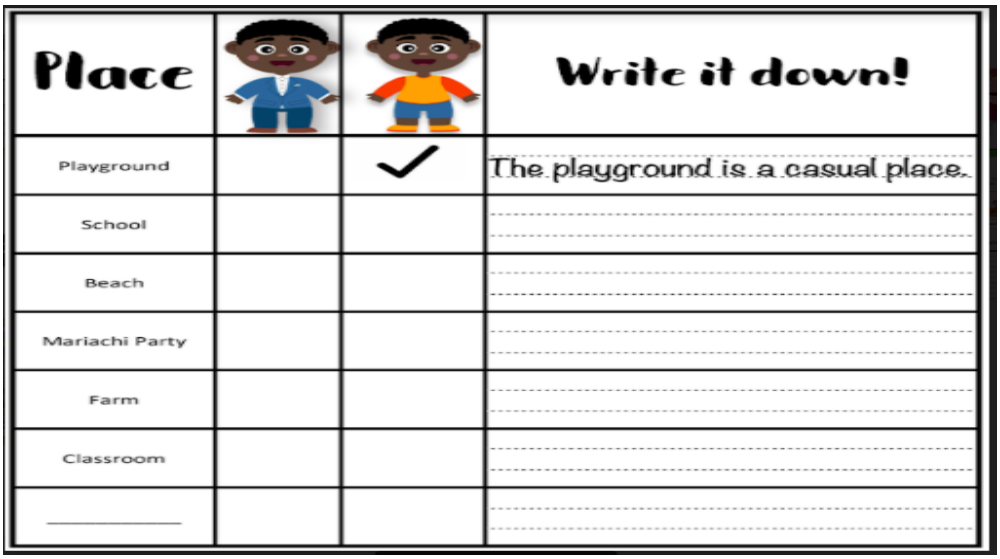


Figure 4.9 Fancy or Casual

Afterwards, I will introduce the module named “writing letter”. In this module, ESL teachers will find the basic parts of any letter. They will use this content to teach ELLs that letters can be casual or fancy depending on who you are addressing it to (See Figure 5.0. See also Appendix A, Slide #10)

Figure 5.0 Writing Letters

After this, I will explain some of the activities from the module. For instance, ELLs will work on the ice cream cone to write a letter to a friend inviting them to a sleep over next weekend. (See Figure 5.1 See also Appendix A, Slide #11)

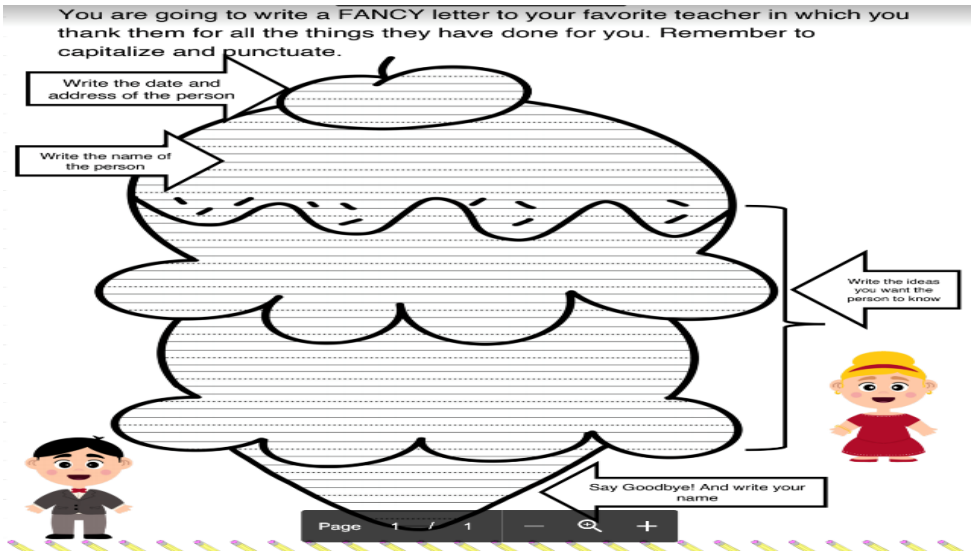


Figure 5.1 Ice Cream Letter

After this, I will introduce the module three-named "story telling" with all the ELLs activities. In this module, ELLs will learn sequencing words both casual and fancy. They will start by learning the words, 5 of each category. Then, they will learn to organize some short stories so that they follow a logic sequence. ELLs will cut out the images found at the end of the document and paste them into the corresponding title (Figures 5.2. to 5.7 Appendix A, Slides #12-17).

Figure 5.2 Storytelling

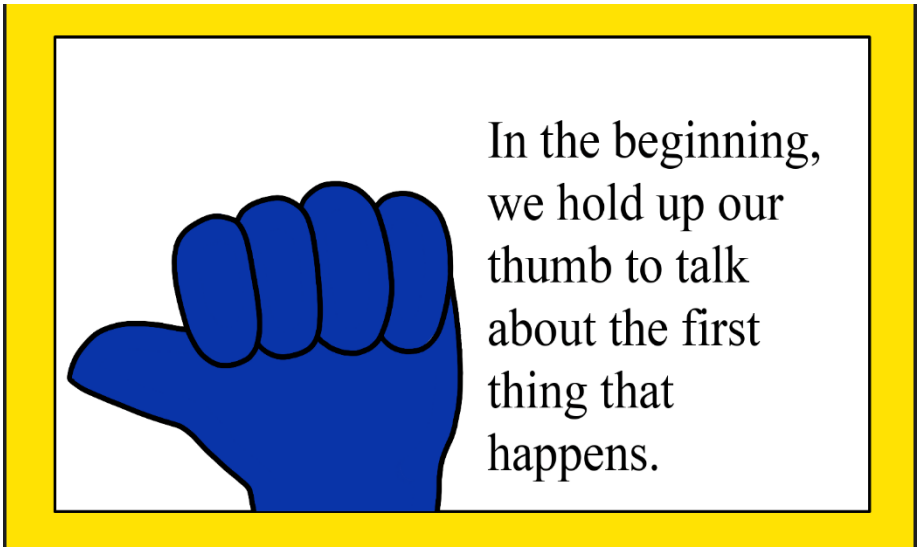


Figure 5.3 Thumb- Up

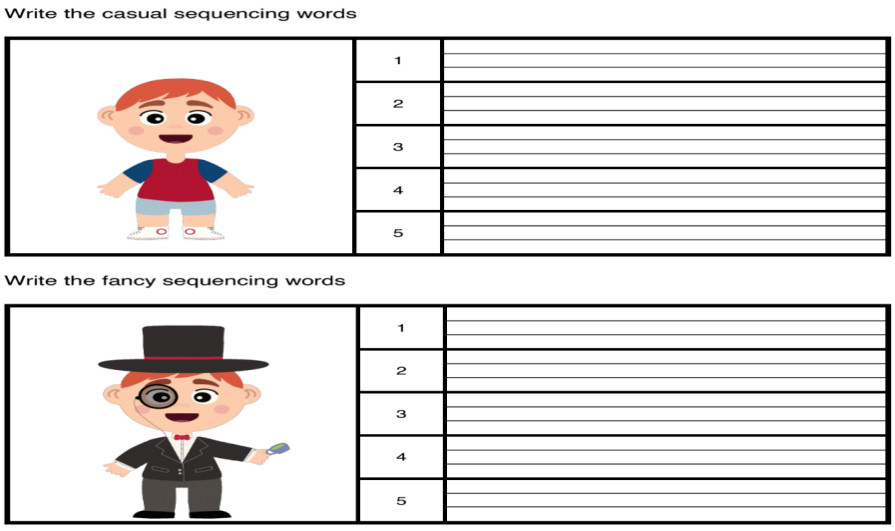


Figure 5.4 Let's Tell Stories

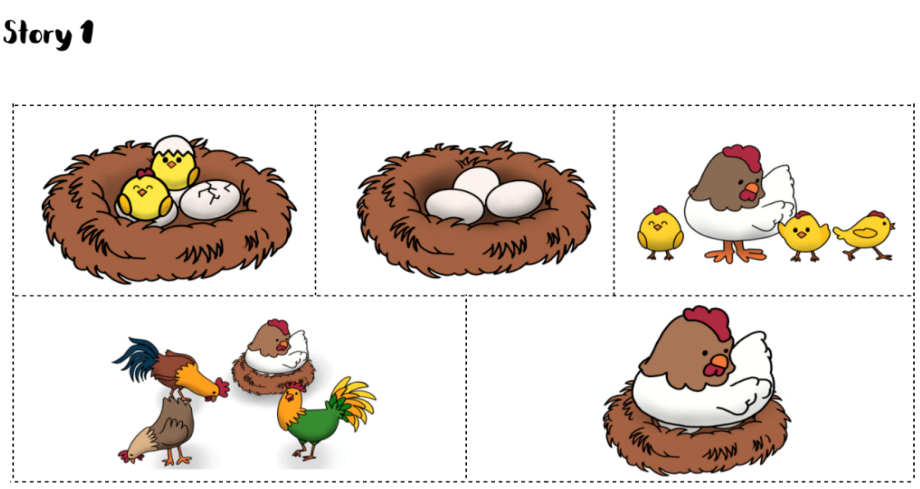


Figure 5.5 Cut –outs

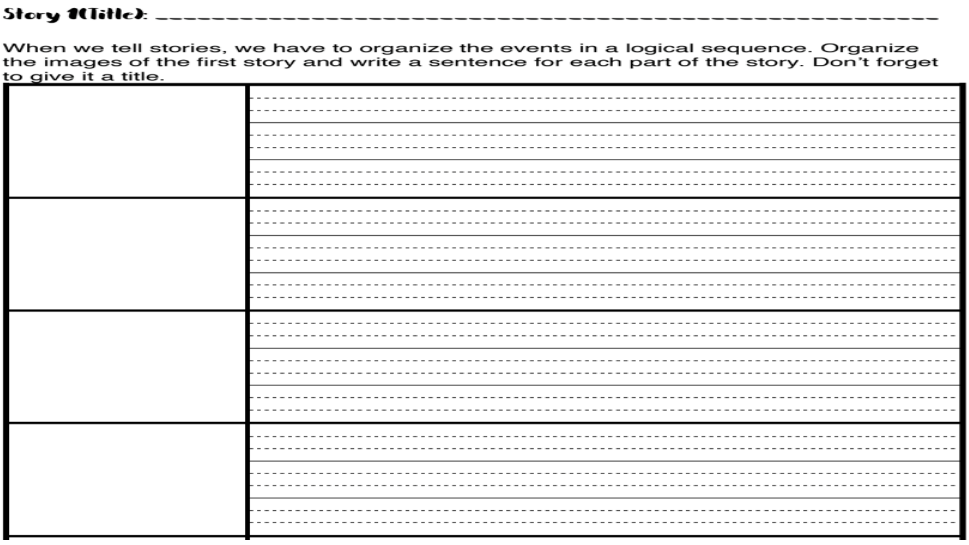


Figure 5.6 Organizer

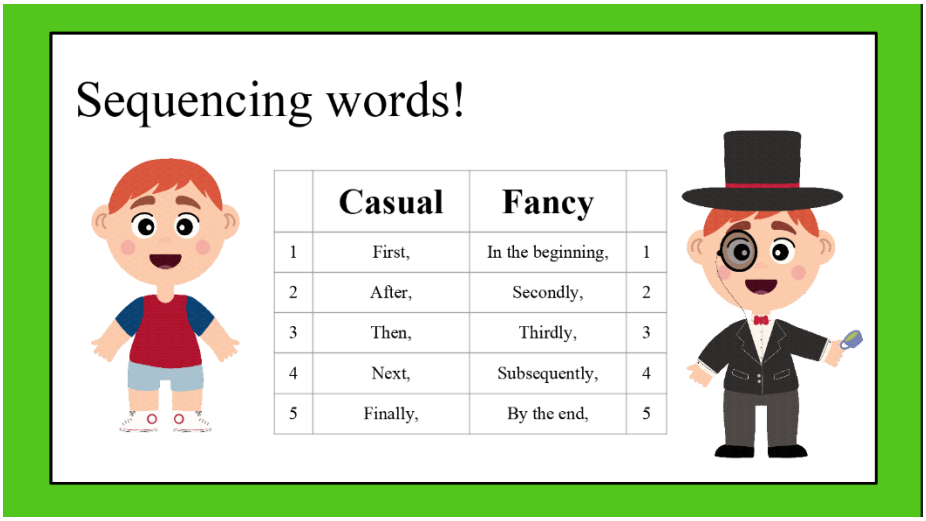


Figure 5.7 Sequence Words

Finally, I will introduce the module four-named "expressing opinion." In this module, ELLs will read a story called "I wanna iguana," and will identify all the reasons the main character Alex gave to his mom to convince her to let him keep his friend's pet iguana. ELLs will write those reasons and will select the ones that according to them are the most convincing

ones. Then, ELLs will select one exotic animal from the list provided in the workshop, and they will do a little research about said animal and classify that information into advantages or disadvantages of having that animal as a pet. Lastly, ELLs will write a letter to their school's principal to convince them to include the student's favorite meal into the school's menu. (Figures 5.8. to 6.2. Appendix A, Slides #17-22).

Figure 5.8 Expressing opinion

We are going to read very attentively "I wanna Iguana" (take notes if necessary).

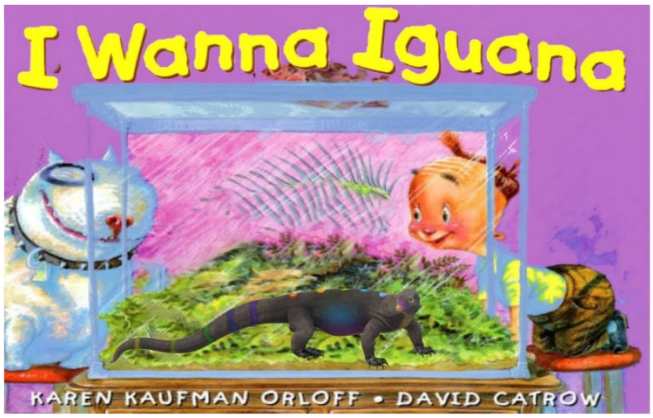


Figure 5.9 I Wanna Iguana

With the help of your teacher, list all of the reasons Alex gave his Mom to convince her of letting him have the iguana

Which ones were the most convincing?

Figure 6.0 Convince

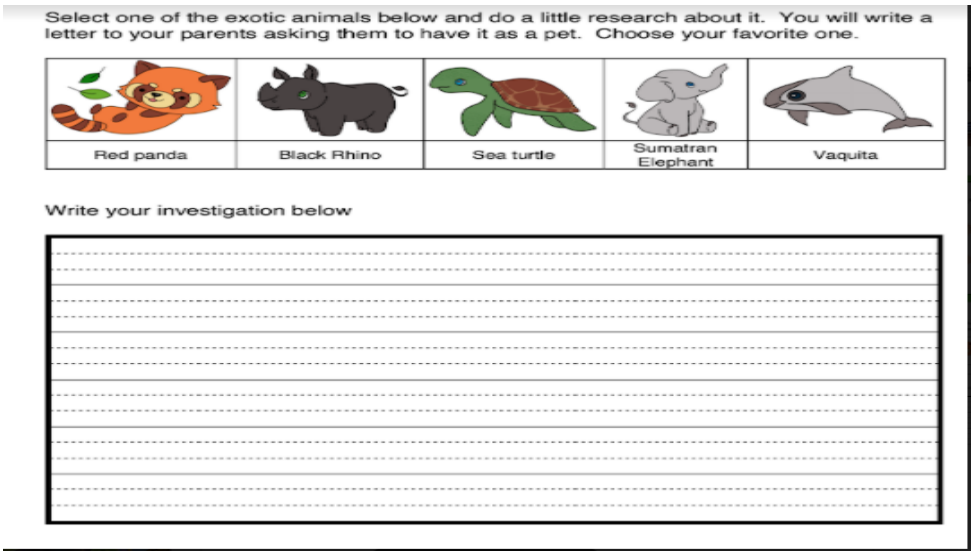


Figure 6.1 Endangered Animals

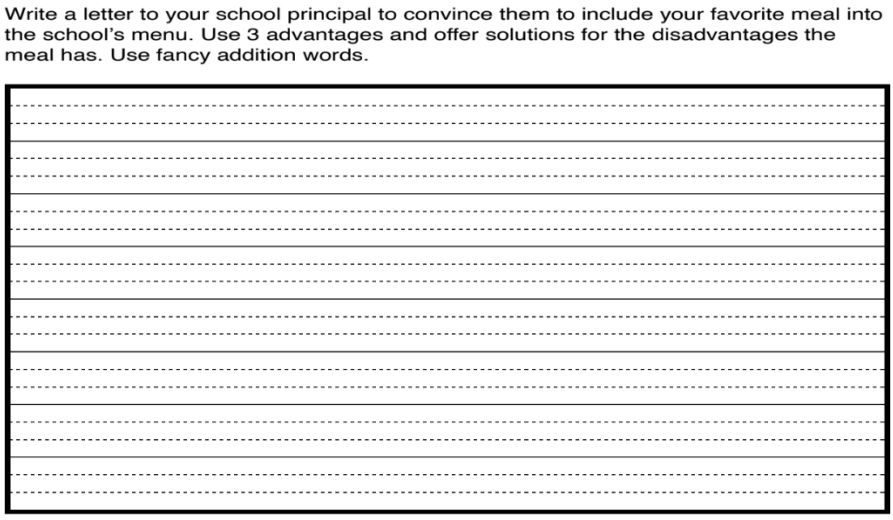


Figure 6.2 School Letter

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Second language acquisition is a difficult process t that must be gone through by those wishing to communicate in a language other than their native tongue. This process is more difficult for learners who just arrive to the new culture. The first stages of the language exposure have a great impact and present a challenge for students because they must adapt to the new country and culture. This adaptation process takes time, effort, and dedication by newcomers, especially to embrace the new culture and the new school system that is different from their home country.

Schools represent a challenge and a place full of opportunities for the English language learners (Ells) because it is the setting where they will develop their skills to success academically. However, it is in this scenario where Ells face many difficulties regarding their academic learning because language becomes a barrier between teachers and Ells or among English native speakers and Ells. At the same time, this setting (school) is the most appropriate place for Ells to acquire the English language. Schools provide students the opportunity to go through the second language stages (Hong, 2008).

When learning a second language, many factors are considered. One of the factors is the mastering of the four domains in the English language. This means, that speaking, writing, reading and listening play a pivotal and equal importance in the English language learning. The four domains are to be practiced at school with the help of classroom teachers and English instructors who provide an extra support to the Ells. It is well known that challenges might come

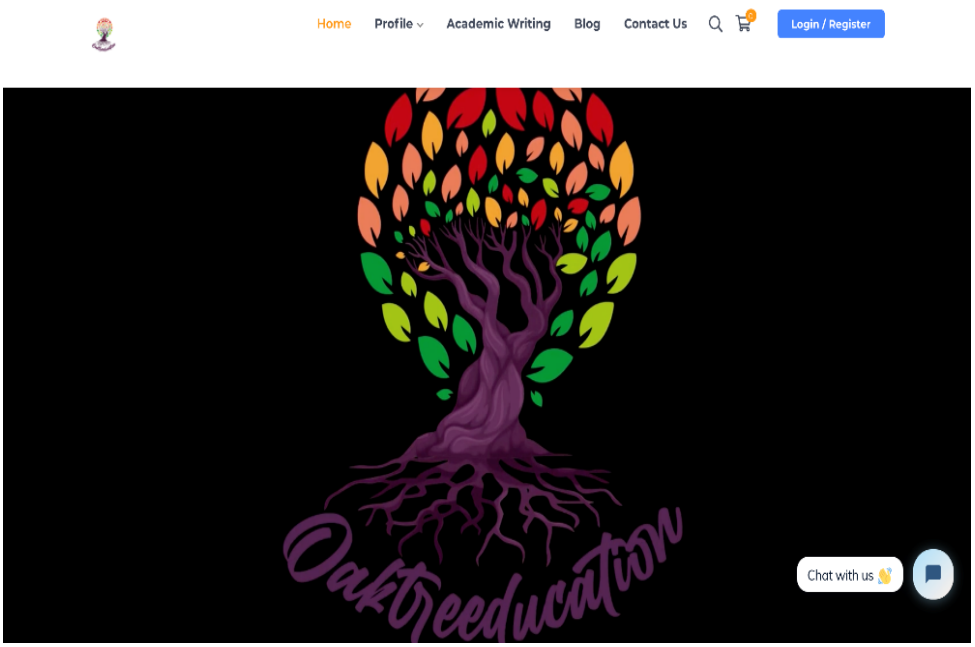
along during the learning process, and students need to know and be aware of the skills they need to develop to be ready for their future field of work.

Considering the need for English learners to improve in their second language acquisition, it is necessary to address the students' weaknesses while learning to guarantee academic success. For this reason, this project attempts to support homeroom classroom and ESL teachers' instructions and provide students with valuable opportunities to improve their writing skills at an early stage. Also, to facilitate the mastering of the writing skill using a website as a technology tool. When I created this project, I thought about taking into account different levels of writing since all the students are different, and they are in a different writing level. The purpose of this website is to assign a writing level to the students and check their growth as they work on the different activities that address their weaknesses. Moreover, this website provides the students the opportunity to reinforce/practice their strengths at writing.

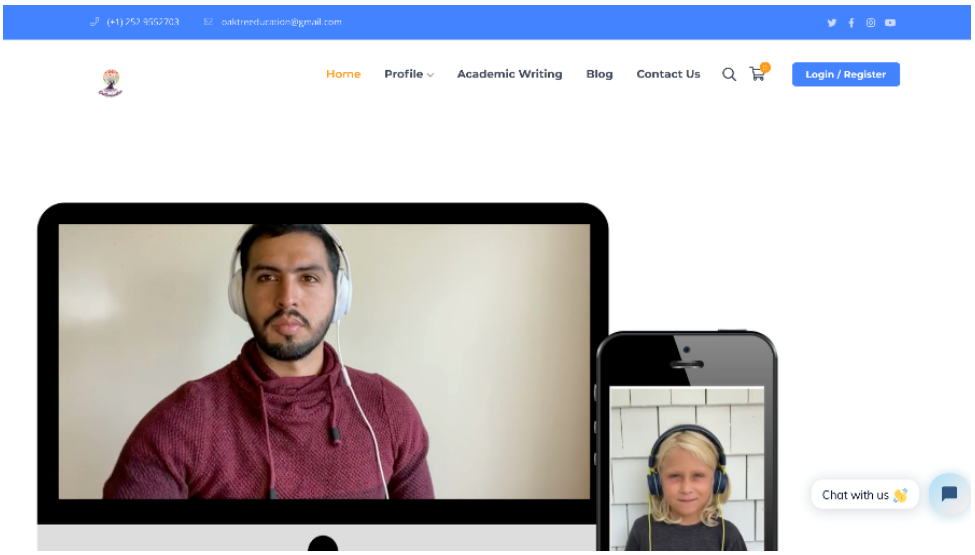
Working in this project has been a great impact in my professional career because I have learned much about providing accurate and valuable opportunities to learn as well as the sense for teaching reflection. This latter has helped me to improve my weaknesses as a teacher to be more effective to my students. As a teacher, one always should seek for more resources to provide students teaching with quality. I truthfully believe that we, as teachers, can make a big impact on students' education by teaching them and giving them advices to be better citizens for this society that claims for outstanding professional to continue with the teaching practice with love, patience and courage.

Appendix A: Slides

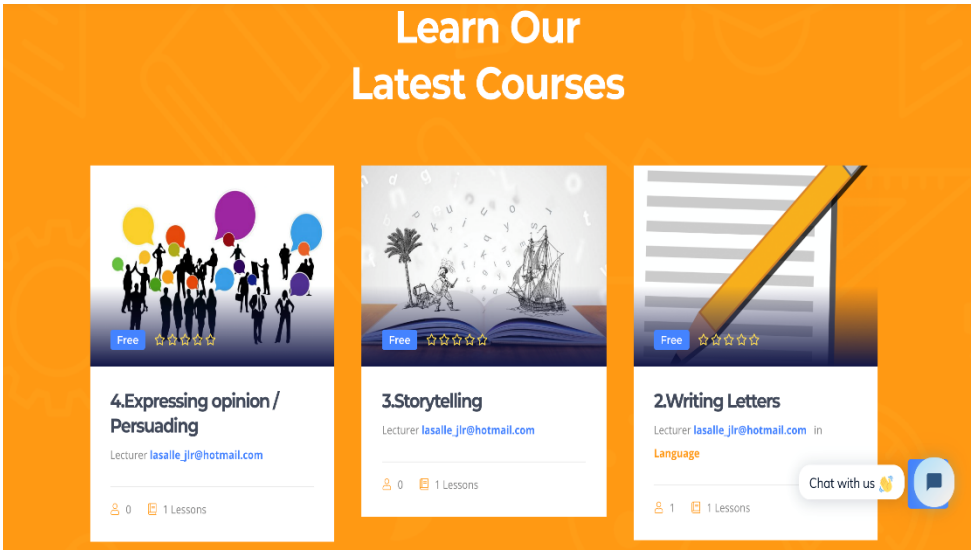
Slide #1



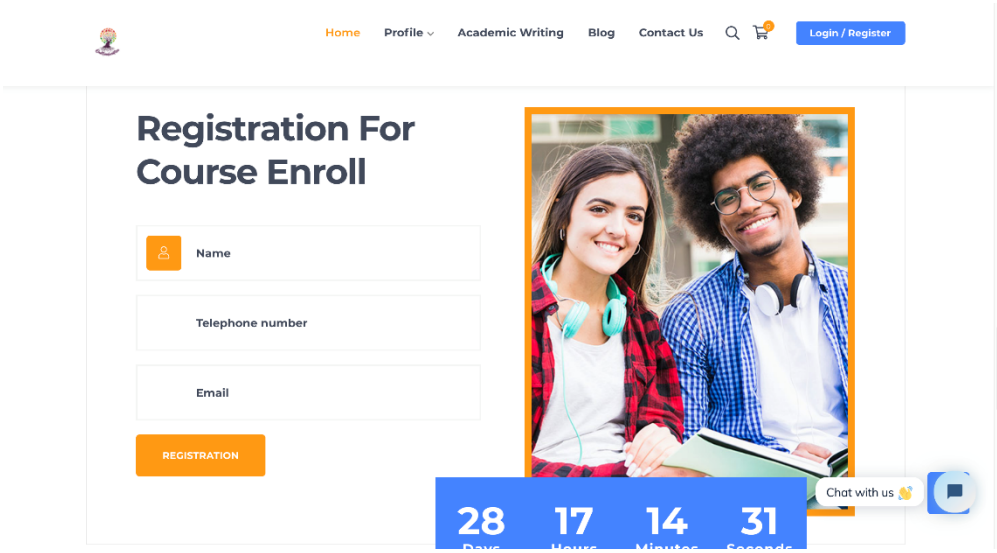
Slide #2



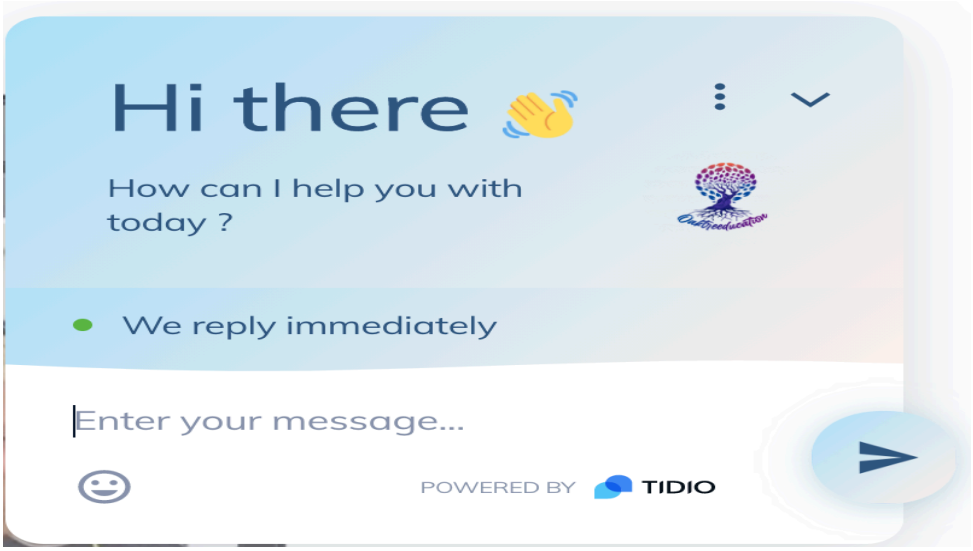
Slide #3



Slide #4



Slide #5



Slide #6

Slide #7

Free

1.Introducing Registers

Lecturer lasalle_jlr@hotmail.com in Language

1 1 Lessons

LEARN MORE →

Slide #8

Curriculums

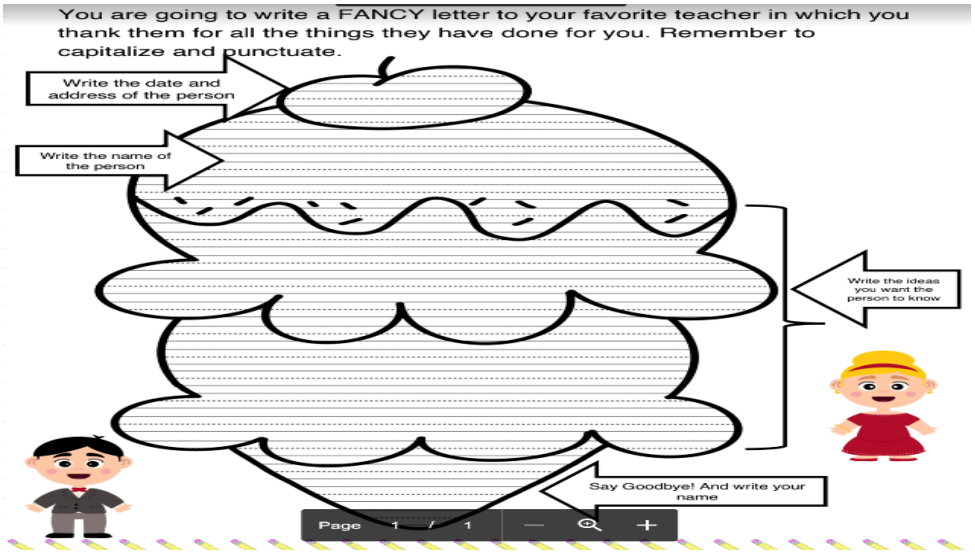
1.Introducing Registers QUIZ

Slide #9

Place			Write it down!
Playground		✓	The playground is a casual place.
School			
Beach			
Mariachi Party			
Farm			
Classroom			
_____			

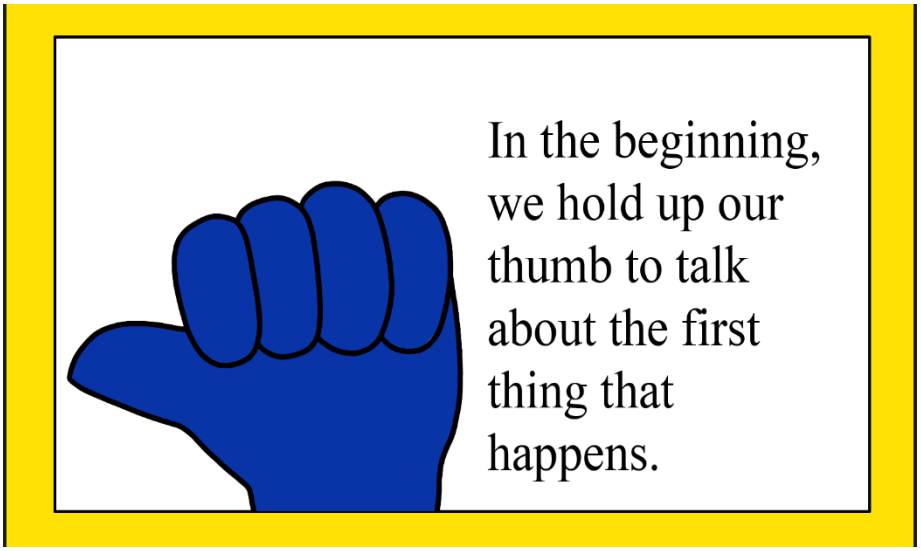
Slide #10

Slide #11



Slide #12

Slide #13



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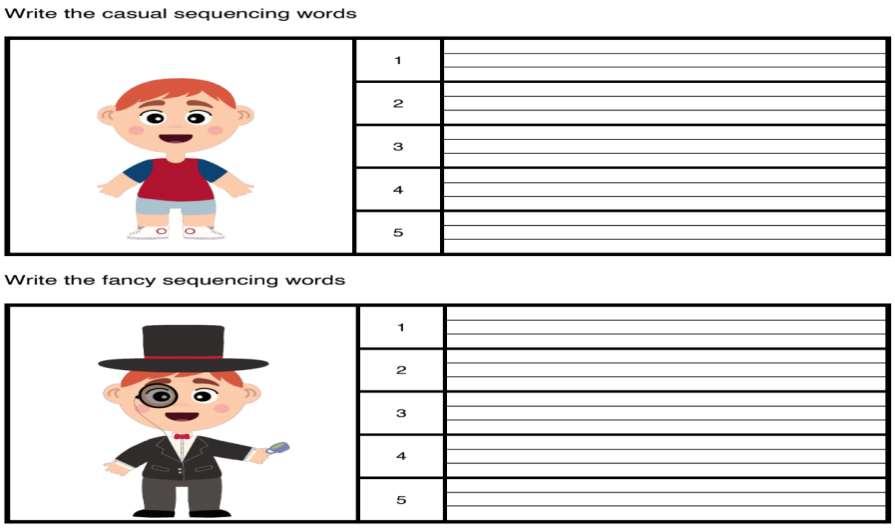
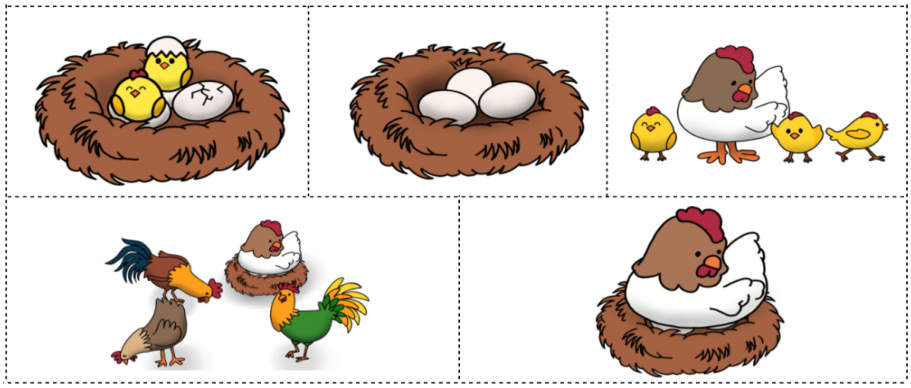


Slide #15

Story 1

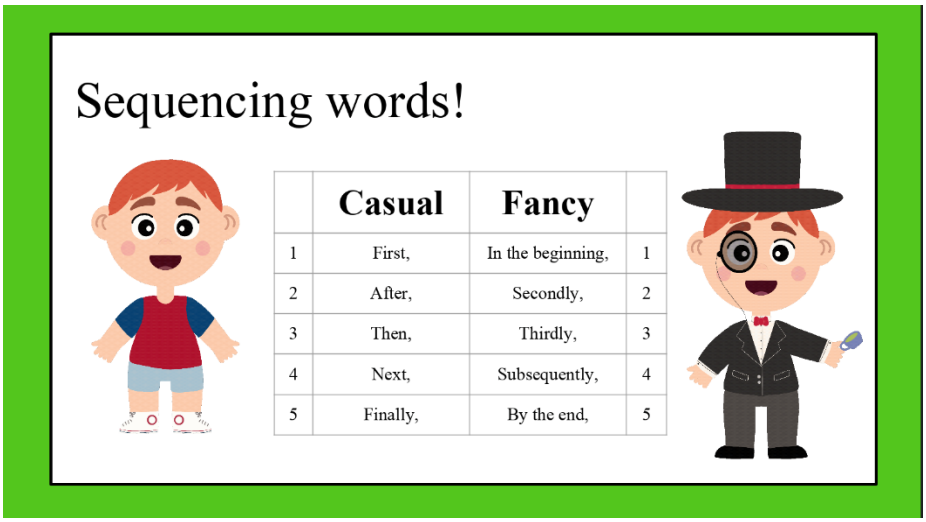


Slide #16

Story 1(Title): _____

When we tell stories, we have to organize the events in a logical sequence. Organize the images of the first story and write a sentence for each part of the story. Don't forget to give it a title.

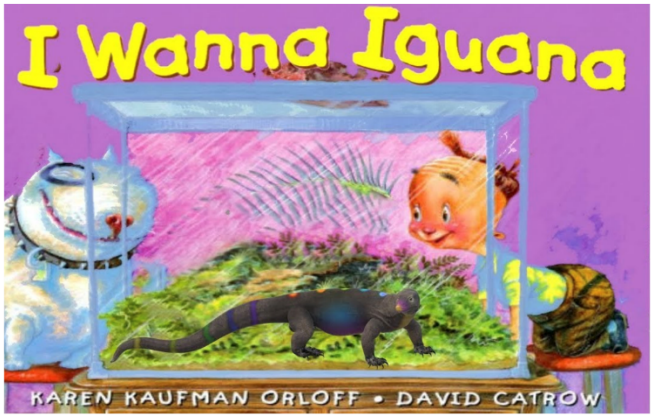
Slide #17



Slide #18

Slide #19

We are going to read very attentively "I wanna Iguana" (take notes if necessary).



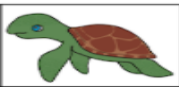
Slide #20

With the help of your teacher, list all of the reasons Alex gave his Mom to convince her of letting him have the iguana

Which ones were the most convincing?

Slide #21

Select one of the exotic animals below and do a little research about it. You will write a letter to your parents asking them to have it as a pet. Choose your favorite one.

				
Red panda	Black Rhino	Sea turtle	Sumatran Elephant	Vaquita

Write your investigation below

Slide #22

Write a letter to your school principal to convince them to include your favorite meal into the school's menu. Use 3 advantages and offer solutions for the disadvantages the meal has. Use fancy addition words.

References

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